10 July 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Support Services Staff

THROUGH   : Deputy Chief, Support Services Staff

SUBJECT   : Records Information System

STATINTL

1. I believe there are three reasons for continuing
and extending the punched card application████████
originally developed for DD/ST. It will provide for the
first time an Agency-wide data base containing detailed
information about on hand records, and files which can
be used to: (1) provide input to a Records System
analysis and design effort; (2) test the notion that
effective management and control can be exercised through
a centralized data base; and (3) provide a basis for
developing records creation and storage policies.

2. Systems Analysis and Design

There has to be a distinction made between a
"Records System" and a "Records information system".
The former is concerned with the creation of records, on
hand storage and use and disposition. The latter is
concerned with building and maintaining a data base
which describes the material flowing through the records
system.

The Agency has a Records system. It has problems.
We don't really know enough about the system to solve its
problems. Hence the need for the Records Information
System. The punched card application is available and it
seems to address the right items. If unnecessary data is
being collected or necessary data is being missed then
modifications should be made. The Records Administration
people will have to make those determinations. In any
event it seems an easy way to develop the data base
required for the information system.

2

Management and Control

Inability to manage a decentralized program from a centralized location has been a long-term aggravation to those responsible for records management. Alternative organizational solutions have not been accepted, so some alternative to an organizational solution is needed. The development of a detailed data base with broad coverage should have the potential for providing a non-organizational alternative.

The Agency Records officer would be the user of the Agency data base. His use of the data base will depend on his immediate purpose but he should be able to review status, project and analyze trends, identify problems and their source(s) and offer advice and guidance from a position of strength. His position of strength derives from posessing detailed facts. His advice and guidance should be less academic and abstract because he knows more about the problem at hand.

Records creation and storage policy

The capability for developing policy follows logically from the capability for establishing management and control. The possession of an information base can be used to develop policy in the same way it is used to develop a management and control mechanism.

3. Some hesitancy has been expressed about adopting the punched card application. The accuracy of the data, the coding structures being used and the necessity for using punched cards (or any other form of automation) are three of the expressed reservations.

Data accuracy should be very suspect and data validation should be the first use of the data base. Comparisons between the Office inventories, the Office records schedules, and related records center data should develop some clues indicating where the inaccuracies are. On the spot investigation and follow-up should indicate why the inaccuracies occurred and what should be done to eliminate them.

Coding structures are a more difficult problem. Codes can be added or the coding structure can be collapsed rather easily. Problems begin to occur if the coded items in the file have to be split between 2 or more new coding categories. The coding being used has been reviewed and it should be reviewed again. This

3

second review should concentrate on making certain that
the existing codes are homogeneous now and have a reasonable
likelihood of remaining so. New codes can be added or
existing codes combined with no problem so long as the
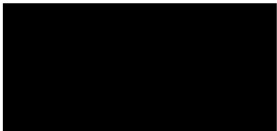homogeneity of the existing codes is retained.

The necessity for using automation can be justified
from two points of view. First, it lends a little
glamour to the exercise. The inventory form (Form 138)
might well be redesigned to reflect its status as an
input document. Using punched cards should result in a
manpower savings by reducing the requirements for tabu-
lating and reporting inventory items. Careful watch
should be kept of manpower savings, if they don't
accrue the punched cards should be abandoned and manual
methods employed. This application should not be program-
med for a computer system.

The segment at top and bottom are release stamps.

STUDY PENDING

AUTOMATION OF RECORD INVENTORY

ATINTL

████████ - PROPSAL

Important

Do not
Remove
from
Records
Staff

INTL

Questions on ▮▮▮▮ Proposal:

I. Clarify input from Records Center on Accession and Disposition Activity

    A. What is source document?

    B. Who prepares it?

    C. Is it an add on to what we are now doing?

    D. Who punches cards on Records Center accession and dispositions?

    E. What is volume of activity on these items?

    F. Any projection of manhours and work load to maintain this part

        of system?

INTL

    G. Does ▮▮▮▮ now have capability?

    H. Is it consistant or compatible with what he now is doing?

   Can paperwork and cards be prepared by depositors?

II. How Accurate is Information going into System?

    Suspect that it may be far less than perfect! If so: we would

    be using erroneous data bases to make decisions!

III. What is frequency of update?

    Annual on inventory?

    A. What type and how do you get accession - disposition activity

STATINTL at ▮▮▮▮ into Component and office runs?

    What frequency -- monthly, quarterly, etc.

IV. Who will use this information?

    For what purposes:

    For what decisions:

    (i.e. what is significance of having precise inventory on component

    basis of safes of record keeping equipment?) Would not OL property in

    use records serve same purpose?

    A. LSD records

    B. Supply division records

ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Records Information System

FROM:

███████████

TO: (officer designation, room number, and building)	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)
	RECEIVED	FORWARDED		
1. DC/SSS 18 JUL 1970				The format didn't quite turn out as I had expected. Paragraph numbering gets a little lost in among sub.headings, etc. Rather than have it retyped I thought I'd best get it out of here.
2. C/SSS 13 JUL 1970				I'm available for debate or discussion as needed. I'm not prepared to assign any one to this just yet. That will depend on what is to be done. STATINTL ██████████
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				What is your reaction? I am still bothered by the question of what such a system will tell us that is valid in the material we are counting and accounting for?
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				w